

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 18

August 16, 2005

SUBJECT: USE OF OBSERVATION POSTS

PURPOSE: An observation post (OP) is a valuable tool for gathering intelligence, recovering evidence and apprehending suspects. Currently, there is no Department procedure which addresses the use of an OP by Department personnel. This Order establishes procedure for utilizing an OP by uniformed and/or plainclothes Department personnel.

PROCEDURE:

- I. OBSERVATION POST - DEFINED.** An observation post is the use of a fixed-post position (e.g., car, building, etc.) intended to be stationary for a period of time, wherein the officers gather intelligence or observe a suspect's actions and coordinate law enforcement actions.
- II. OPERATION PLAN, FORM 12.22 - ACTIVATED.** The Operation Plan, Form 12.22, is activated.
 - A. Use of Form.** This form shall be completed prior to conducting pre-planned OP activities (i.e., buy-bust, surveillance).
 - B. Completion.** The officer initiating the activity shall complete this form.
 - C. Distribution.**
 - 1 - Original, W/C or OIC approving the OP.
 - 1 - TOTAL**
- III. OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY.** All Department uniformed and plainclothes personnel shall obtain approval from his/her assigned Area watch commander (W/C) or Officer In Charge (OIC) and notify the W/C of the involved Area prior to the utilization of an OP.

Only Professional Standards Bureau, Major Crimes Division or entities with prior approval from their bureau commanding officer or the Chief of Police are exempt from obtaining approval from their W/C or OIC.

A written Operation Plan, Form 12.22, shall be submitted to the approving W/C or OIC on all pre-planned OPs. In the event of a "spontaneous OP," or if circumstances preclude officers from creating a written Operation Plan, Form 12.22, verbal notification shall be made to the approving W/C or OIC.

Note: Verbal notification should include specific locations, duty assignments (i.e., arrest teams, communication officer, etc.), nearest hospital, radio frequency, etc.

If an OP is utilized and an arrest is made, the arresting officers shall document the Operation Plan, Form 12.22, (if completed) and the name of the supervisor providing oversight in the arrest report.

IV. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY. The assigned supervisor is not required to be present; however, they shall monitor the OP operation via Astro radio or direct communication with the involved officers. The OP operation and the Operation Plan, Form 12.22, (if completed) shall be documented in the Sergeant's Daily Report, Form 15.48.

V. WATCH COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITY. When a request for an OP is made, the watch commander shall determine the need for an Operation Plan, Form 12.22, and the assignment of a supervisor to monitor the OP. If an OP is approved, the watch commander shall document the approval and the OP operation in the Watch Commander's Daily Report, Form 15.80. The completed Operation Plan, Form 12.22, shall be attached to the Watch Commander's Daily Report, Form 15.80.

FORM AVAILABILITY: The Operation Plan, Form 12.22, will be available for ordering from the Department of General Services, Distribution Center, in about 90 days and will be placed on the Department's Local Area Network (LAN). A Copy of the form is attached for duplication and immediate use.

AMENDMENTS: This Order revises Section 4/216.50 of the Department Manual.

AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY: The respective Bureau Commanding Officer shall monitor compliance with this directive in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

WILLIAM J. BRATTON
Chief of Police

Attachments

DISTRIBUTION "A"